

THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
BLIND BEGGER  
Of Bednal-Green,

Young *Monford* Riding to the Wars, where he unhappily lost his Eye-sight.



Licensed and Enter'd according to Order.

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T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E

Blind Beggar of Bednal-Green, &c.

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C H A P. I,

*How Monford, the Beggar of Bednal-Green, went accompanied with his Wife, to the Wars of France; and by what Means he came to lose his sight, and save his Life; and of his Return to England. &c.*

**I**N former Days, when the Rose of England eclipsed the Lillies of France, and true English Valour made that Nation stoop, among other brave Gallants that went over to try their Fortune, Monford was one, a Person well descended, who being naturally inclin'd to War, and greedy of Fame, neither the Entreaty of Friends nor the Marriage he had contracted with a kind and beautiful Woman, could alter his Purpose; but taking his Wife *Margaret* with him, who by no means would be induced to stay behind, he, with many Hundreds more, crossed the Seas, and with the help of a prosperous Wind, arriving at *Callice*, marched to the

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Royal Standard, accompany'd with his loving Wife, who, in Man-like Attire, became his inseparable Companion in Danger and Hazards, and was the Cause of saving his Life : from many Skirmishes happening between the *English* and *French*, wherein young *Monford* behaved himself with wonderous Courage ; and in one, following too hot the Pursuit, was, with divers others, intrapped into Ambush, late in the Evening ; and though he manfully disputed it, making great Slaughter of the Enemy, yet, in spite of Resistance he was beaten from his Horse by a forcible Stroke, and left in the



Field for dead among the dead and dying Men ; where he had undoubtedly perished through loss of Blood, and the Anguish of his Wound, had not his tender-hearted Love, upon her hearing what had hapened, and his not returning, hasted to the Field ; where, amongst the Slain, she ( by *Moon-light* ) discovered him, stripped and struggling for Life, and by the Help of a Servant, brought him to a Shepherd's Cottage, where she carefully dressed his Wounds, and

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and administred ſue Cordials as brought him to himſelf, to her unſpeakable Joy ; tho' this joy was ſomething abated when ſhe found, by the forcibleſſ of the Blow, he had loſt his ſight : But true Love working in her Heart, the Alteration or Diſfigurement of his Countenance could not alter her Affection ; but comforting him in the beſt ſhe could (tho' indeed his natural Courage would not lightly admit of any Dejection) ſhe, with part of the Mōny ſhe had, procur'd him a homely Suit of Apparel, and brought him now (unfit for Service) back to *England*, of whoſe Entertainment and Settlement at *Bednal-Green*, in the County of *Middleſex*, and Courſe of Life you ſhall hear in the following Capter.

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C H A P, 2.

*How Monford arrived in England, and of the cold Entertainment he found amongſt his Relations : How he came to Bednal-Green, and ſettling himſelf there, he continued to Beg for his Living, &c.*

**M**onford eſcaping a Storm at Sea, in his Return, landed with his vertuous Wife on the Coaſt of *Effex*, where he had ſome conſiderable Relations, to whom, in this Neceſſity, they applied themſelves for Succour ; but they, either not deſirous of his Company, who, after the Death of his Parents, had waſted much of his Patrimony, or fearing in that condition he might be chargable to them, would not know him ; and thoſe that were convinced he was the ſame *Monford* that went over into *France*, gave him but cold Entertainment ; in ſo much, that ſcorniſg to rely upon their Charity, he told the kind Partner of his Joy and Sorrow, that he intended [ early in the Morning ] to haſt towards *London*, and that he would rather truſt to providence, then the Ingratitude of thoſe who

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 who in his prosperous Days had caressed him in a high manner,  
 his Wife cherished him, declaring she would not be idle at home,  
 but Labour at her Spinning-wheel, and at such other Matters as in  
 her younger Years she had been brought up to : And so without



taking Leave of any, early in the Morning they departed ; and in  
 two Days traveling (having spent the little Money they had reserved)  
 Necessity, that has no Law, so far humbled his high Spirit,  
 that he did not think it amiss (especially in Places where he was not  
 known) to crave the Charity of the People as he passed through several  
 good Towns, who understanding that he came by his misfortune  
 in fighting for the Honour of his Country, gave very liberally,

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in so much, that he resolv'd to be of good Cheer; and thereupon considering with himself, that he was never brought up to Labour, or if he had, the loss of his Sight had render'd him incapable of Business, he resolv'd to embrace what Providence had cast in his Way; which was to live upon Charity, which he found to flow in upon him faster then he expected: Whereupon, arriving at *Bednal-Green*; a Place near *London*, he, with the little Mony he had got, hired a small Cottage for his Wife and himself, and daily appearing publick to crave Alms was from thence called, *The Beggar of Bednal-Green* and in a short time found it a thriving Trade, in so much that his Bed of Straw was chang'd into Down, and his Earthen Platters, and other Utensils, into a better sort.

C H A P. 3.

*How Monford happened to meet with Snap, an old experienced Begger who gave him an Insight into the Mystery of the Canting Tribe, and how he invited him to their General Rendezvous. &c.*

**M**onford resolving in this kind of Way to spend the remainder of his Days, that he might humble himself for his former Offences, having played it with good Success in the Place where he lived, by the Road side, he was Encountered one Day by an old Proficient at the Trade, who seeing him diligent, became greatly desirous of his Acquaintance, and know what Gang he belonged to, and began to Cant (as is usual amongst such seasoned Strick of that Profession) of which kind of speech, being known to none but themselves, *Monford* being ignorant, could make him no direct Answer; which the other, whose Name was *Snap*, perceiving, and thereby knowing him to be a young Beginner, invited him to their Feasts, or Rendezvous in *White-Chappel*, whither he having promised to come, and they between them tipp'd of four black Pots of Ham, they at that time parted.

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C H A P. 4.

*How Monford went to the Begger's Feast, and of his Entertainment; as also of the Present they made him, &c.*

**M**onford, upon his coming home, declared to his Wife what a merry Companion he met with, and what discourse he had, as likewise what he had promised, entreating her to get things in a raidinels, that she might be at leisure to conduct him thither, where appeared instead of a ragged Regiment of Lame, Blind and Dumb, there was a Rout of jovial Dancers, as gay as the Spring, and as merry as the Maids; which made them immagin they were either mistaken in the Place, or had been imposed upon; and therefore



were about to retire, had not *Snap*, who knew *Monford* at the first Blush, started from his Chair, where he sat as Supervisor in all his Gallantry, and taking him by the Hand, let him know who he

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he was, and afterward presented him to the whole Assembly, who received him as a Brother, or a Member of their Society, each, by the Order of *Snap*, paying him a Complement: And that for the future he might not want a Guide on all Occasions, *Snap* (in the Name of the rest) presented him with a Dog and a Bell, trained to the Business, and had before been the Companion of an Eyeless Beggar



deceased; and so having feasted him and his Spouse in a splendid manner, they dismissed him, upon his promise, that he would not be wanting at that yearly Meeting; and being dismissed, he trudged home with his tractable Guide, which ever after proved serviceable to him.

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### C H A P. 5.

*What Success he had in the Begging Trade, and how a Daughter was born to him, and Christened by the Name of Elizabeth.*

**T**HE Blind Beggar, by these fortunate Adventures, being in a manner Master of his Trade, scorned to be confined to his former plying Places, but by the help of his Dog, trudged often to London; and having the perfect Tone, had (for the most part) the Luck to return with his Pockets well lined with Chink, and by long Practice, his way of Begging became so pleasing to him, that he would often profess it the happiest Part of his Life, and thus Tune his Pipes upon Occasion.

### *His S O N G.*

**A** Beggar lives a merry Life, He hath both wealth and Ease,  
His days are free from Care and strife, He do's what e'er he please,  
Whilst others Labour, Sweat and Toil, His Tongue doth get him Pelf;  
He Travels with his Dog and Bell, And brings home of Wealth.

He being by this time in a warm Condition, to add further to his Joy, and make him amends for the Loss of his Sight, his loving and careful Wife fell in Labour, and brought forth the loveliest Girl imaginable, whose Birth made him quite forget his former Misfortunes, and think himself the happiest Man alive; an Hundred times he kissed her, and dandled her in his Arms, and at her Christening (which was managed with Decency and Prudence) caused her to be named *Elizabeth*. from whence she was afterward deservedly called, *Pretty Betty*; for, as she grew up, she exceeded in Beauty to a Degree of Wonder, her courteous and seemly Behaviour no less obliging; so that in her very Childhood, some began

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began to dote upon her admirable Perfections, and the better to qualifie her gave her such Learning as was suitable to her Degree, which she improved to the highth, so that her Beauty and Wit, her Skill in Singing, Dancing, and playing on Instruments of Musick, procured her the Envy of the Virgins thereabouts; who suppose themselves much superiour in Birth and Fortune, could ill endure to bear her Praises every where spoken of, especially, by the young Men, whilst they stood neglected, insomuch, that not knowing other ways how to vent their Spleen, they would often take Occasion openly to affront her in the Street, and at Merry-makings, calling her Beggar's Brat and uttering many unseemly Speeches, which she bore as long as she could endure, with a becoming Patience, and strove, by gentle Perswasions, and Reproofs; to win them to a Reconcilement; and often with Tears in her lovely Eyes, she would be apt to say to them: You shall not, methinks, envy me at this Rate, who never enjured you: but strive to



do you all the good Office I can: What if my Parents are (as you suppose them) Mean, and you were QUEEN and not so well Descended as you selves, though in that you may be mistaken? it might have been

*your Case had Heaven seen fit, and had it been so, tell me which of you would not have been afflicted to have been used as you unkindly use me.*

These or such like Expressions being uttered in vain, and many Ways being contrived by her ill-willers to discourage those Suitors that sought her Love, she being by this time Fifteen Years of Age; wherefore to End the Snare, and in hopes to be kinder used among Strangers; she resolved to make it her Request to her Parents, that she might take her Lot in search of Fortune; the which she did with Tears in her Eyes, telling them the Cause; but they long time opposed it, using many Arguments to persuade her to the contrary; But finding the Reasons she urged weighty, and tending to her Advantage, they left it to her Discretion.

## C H A P. 6.

*How the Blind Beggar's Daughter left her Father's House, to seek her Fortune; the Reason why she did it; and the Entertainment she found.*

**T**HE Day being come that pretty Betty, the Blind Beggar's Daughter should depart, being furnished with Cloaths, money, and other Necessaries she fell upon her Knees and craved her Parents Blessing; which being given with many Prayers for her Prosperity, they took a sad farewell, and each betook them, viz/ Monford to his mumping Trade, his Wife to her Wheel and the Daughter to seek her Fortune.

Pretty Betty having left her Father's House, or rather Smoak-Loss, went pensive along the Road towards Stradford, as one not resolved whither to go, but rather trusting to Fortune, and her Good Angel to direct her; and so travelling all Night by the

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the Light, of the Moon, by sun-<sup>set</sup> she came to Rumsford in Essex, where finding her self faint. she betook her self to an Inn, and there sitting down, called for somewhat to refresh her, looking pensive and sad, and often sighing at her hard Fortune; which the Mistress of the House perceiving, as also her neat Garb and modest behaviour, began to question her from whence she was, or whether she was bound? who told her that she was one that had been well educated by indulgent Parents, but was now contrary to her former Expectation, forced to seek her Fortune; and that she was born near London, Upon this the good Woman being more and more



taken with her Carriage demanded if she would be content to stay with her till she could better provide to her Advantage, and that she would use her as a Daughter, rather than a Servant; to this after a while

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while, having weighed, and considered it, she consented, and in the Performance of whatever she undertook, discharged her self so well, that she gained the Love and Applause of all that observed her, insomuch that her Name for Beaut, and Ingenuity began to spread, and a bundance of young Men resorted to the House, which created a great Trade, on purpose to see her, who generally took a liking to her; for Nature had made her so lovely and charming that she could not but be admired; insomuch, that many of them as they found opportunity began to buz Love Stories in her Ears; to which she gave but little heed, till four Suitors of greater Worth beat off these little Assailants, and laid a close Siege, as in the following Chapter will appear.

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C H A P. 7.

How pretty Betty, the Blind Beggar's Daughter, living at an Inn at Rumsford, was courted by divers Persons of good Birth Fortune, &c.

**I**T being by this time secretly whipered, that pretty Betty must be more than she seemed as to her Parantage, it made her Reputation grow higher insomuch that the Inn-keeper's Son, a London Merchant, a Gentleman of good Estate and a rich Knight, courted her Favour; against whose Importunities she urged the meanness of her Birth, and inequality of Fortune; insinuating them (if they were in jest, as she could not otherwise imagine) to spare the blushes of an innocent Maid; or if in earnest, to connect to consider how much whoever of them had her, would impair himself by so unequal a match and place his Affections elsewhere, lest he not meeting in her his Expectation, his Love, after Marriage, should decay, & turn to reproach, which she said would break her poor heart. This modest Objection possessed

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essed them with farther thoughts of her concealing the Worth of her Birth and Parentage, and gave more Fuel to their Passions: So easie is Man to believe the things he would have; insomuch that they began to renew their protestations of Love and entire Affections, offering her Rings, Gloves, and Jewels; but she would not except of them, lest she taking the

*The young Knight  
that Married pretty Betty*



Gift without the Man might be prejudicial to her Fame; for all of them she well knew she could not have; or whether any of them, when they came to know that her Father was a Beggar, would have her. She could not well believe; tho' they severally promised to love her as dear as Life, and maintain her in the height of Gallantry, whose addresses her Master and Mistress suffered for the sake of their Profit; yet she growing conscious of the Injury she might do them, by hindring their Fortunes, made a Resolution to discover her Parents, and that way try the sincerity of their Affections; and according did it.

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C H A P. 8.

*How Pretty Betty being Wooed by her Master's Son, a Merchant, a Gentleman, and a Knight upon her declaring her Parentage, was slighted by all but the Kt. and of the Agreement.*

**O**UR beautiful Virgin being hardly pressed for Love and Enjoyment, found her self obliged to take a Course that might rid her of her LOVERS, or all or one of them to her share; wherefore she told them she was not really at her own Disposal, her Parents being alive, therefore if they loved her, as they said and seeing but one could enjoy her, she was contented her Father should chuse one for her, of whose Choice she would approve.

Thus sat them at a manner at Daggers drawing who should get thither first; but whither to go they knew not; therefore desired to be informed, every ones Heart being filled with Joy, not doubting to carry the Prize; when thus she began:

*My Parents, worthy Sirs, live on Bednal-Green, my Father is led with a Dog and a Bell, living upon the Charity of good People; and my mother, a poor Woman that spins for Bread; and these are my Parents therefore I will not be induced by any means to marry without their Consent.*

This struck our Gallants for a while as mute as a Mouse in a Cheese, after which they made difficulty to believe it, saying it could not be, that such home-spun Creatures could be the Parents of so beautiful a Maid; but she insinuating upon it, and giving them an Account of the leaving them, and the Reason, they began to scratch their Nodules, and stamp on the Ground, drawing in their Horns faster than they had put them out, the Merchant, the Gentleman, and the Inn keeper's SON, swearing if so, it was no Wife for them, for they would not be noised with  
one

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one of a Beggars Degree, and so they troop'd off. But the young Knight who was inflamed with Love, and having a great Estate, stood not upon Interest so much as pleasing his fancy; after he had paused a while, took the blushing Maid by the Hand, and said. You see my Dearest, how those



that courted you, in hopes of a great Fortune, are vanished now they find their Mistake: Say will you yield to one more constant, who truly Loves you for your Beauty and good Parts, and you shall be, without any delay, sole Mistress of him, and a' that is his.

To which she answered with a Sign, Alas! Sir, I dare not expect so great a Happiness, or if I durst, I would not dispose of my self even to you who [tho' blushing] I must confess I ever esteemed above the rest, without Consent of my Parents, for though they are Poor yet they are my Parents still.

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This Modesty kindled his Passion more and more, wherefore after much Discourse and many Vows of Constancy, it was agreed, that he should be ready with a Horse and Servants the next Morning early, and that she would come to him, that they might ride to *Bednal-Green*, to require the Old Man's Consent; yet this was not carried on so secret, but Spies being abroad, discovered it, not only to the Knight's Uncle, who managed his Estate, but to most of the Young Men of *Rumford*, who were her Admirers.

C H A P. 9.

*How Pretty Betty rid behind the Knight to her Father's House and what befel by the Way, as also when she arrived there, how her Father dropped Angels with the Kts. Uncle that opposed the Match.*

OUR beautiful Virgin meeting her Courteous Kt. at the time and Place appointed, relying upon his Fidelity, made no scruple to use his Servants help in setting her behind him: but scarcely were they out of Town, but the Knight's Uncle coming to the Inn, finding neither of them there, suspected what had been told him to be true; and thereupon he followed to prevent the match, as also did divers Young Men were deeply in LOVE with her, to rescue her from the Knight, whom they supposed had carried her away by Force.

So that great was the Hurry and Confusion, and the Towns-men taking the nearer Way, got before him e'er he arrived at *Bednal-Green*, and fell upon him without giving him leave to Speak for him.

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himself, or suffering his Mistress to excuse it; so that there began a sharp Conflict, till such times as divers Persons that were Tra-



velling the Road came in and parted them, whereby they came to a right understanding; which made those that had mis-use him beg his Pardon, which he granted, and dismissing them on his way, till coming to the Old Man's Door they alighted; which made him upon the hearing of the Horses trampling (being a Thing very unusual) start from the Fire, and put his head out of the Window, and not understanding the Meaning of it, e'er the Knight's Uncle came puffing and blowing at a strange Rate; crying, Why how now Nephew? What's this I hear of you? are you Mad to Disgrace your Family by Marrying a Beggar's brat? for for shame, for shame, consider better then to make your self a Laughing stock to the World, by such an unseemly Match: Pray came it is about you baggae you? But however, I say Nephew,

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leave her, and I will provide you a Fortune, Rich and Suitable to  
your Condition.

To this the Young Knight would have replied, but the Beggar growing Cholerick to hear his Daughter so used, interrupted him.

I cannot (says the Old Man) see you at all, but Sir, (whatever you are) I hear too much, and more a civil becomes a civil Gentleman nor do I count my Girl so Mean, to suffer her to be railed on at my own Door; therefore pray Sir, hold Your prating; or I shall feel for You with my staff: I have known the Day when a taller Fellow than You durst not put me in a Passion. if Your Kinsman do's not think my Child a fit Match for him let him let her alone, and welcome; but I think in Beauty and good Breeding she is not wanting, and as for Money be it known unto You, her Father is ready to drop Ange's with You for his Girl, if You have any of Your own: Do Ye mark me there.

This smart Speech put the Gentleman to a Nonplus for a while; but coming to milder Terms, the dropping business was Concluded on.

And the Gentleman immediately sending his Servant to fetch what Gold he had, whilst the Beggar from under a heap of Rags, and old Shooes, pull'd out a Car's Skin or two stuffed with Gold, whereby it appeared his Trade had been advantageous: And each Party being ready they rained a Golden Shower so plentifully, that the Gentleman's Stock failed him, and the Beggar not hearing it Chink, fell into a Laughter, and said; How now Sir, is your Money done so soon? I thought at first you had more Words then Money; pray for your Credits Sake, try your Friends, for I have 3 or 4 Car's Skins, with Golden Puddings in their Bellies yet. Indeed, said the Gentleman, I am content to own you have out done me, and think you have the Philosopher's Stone or keep a Familiar to bring it to you from the Golden Mountains: But seeing the VVorld goes so well vvith you, I shall no further go about to perswade my Nephew

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phew from being your Son in Law, but beg Pardon for what I have done. O do you so? [said the Beggar] then may things be better perhaps then you expect: When turning to the Knight, Gasher up said he the loose Carns I have scattered, and here's Cat's Skin to make that up three Thousand Pounds, besides a Hundred more to buy her a Gown; take this as her present Portion, and as you behave your self, expect more hereafter: Remember I give you her with my Blessing: Go to Church



and be Married in God's Name. Upon which the Knight and his fair Mistress falling on their Knees, and gave him twenty Thanks and departed; whilst those that had been Suitors, hearing what had happened, were ready to hang themselves for Madness.

C H A P

## C H A P, X.

*How Pretty Betty was Married to the Knight and her true Pedigree discovered; together, with the Festival and Joy that ensued.*

**T**HINGS being come to this pass, great Preparations were made for the Wedding, to which resorted many worthy Personages, no cost being spared, either in rich Apparel, or Sumptuous Fare, whilst the lovely Bride was led to the Church by her worthy Bridegroom, feasting the Eyes of the Beholders with her beauty; and when the sacred bands were ty'd, she return'd with the like Splendor, to the Place of Festival Excellency becoming and Gracing what they were, as if Nature had made her the most exact Pattern of Beauty: Being arrived, at the Table spread, the Bride, now of a Beggars's Daughter made Lady,



took her Place, out shining others Beauties that were there, as the MOON is out shone by the Sun: And now nothing but the Old Beggar and his Wife was wanting, when they soon came, richly dressed in Silk and Velvet, Embroidered with Gold, so that all

*all Things went on in joy and Merriment, and great was the Satisfaction the Company received in their Repast; but more in the Musick, Dancing Masquerading, and the like; While the Old Man had prepared to Celebrate the happy Nuptials, and in the End, crving Attention, he Sung this.*

## S O N G.

**Y**OU GALLANTS all that here are come?  
to make this Day more happy prove,  
KNOW though I'm Blind, I am not Dumb:  
but wish you Happiness and Love,  
The Bride, though her Birth seem but mean,  
descended of a Worthy Race?  
Her Ancestors they great have been,  
if you her Pedigree do Thrice.

KNOW, she is Monford's Daughter fair?  
who lost his Sight in Wars of FRANCE:  
V Who ever since in BEGGING here,  
did take his Happy thriving Chance,  
Consider, Bridegroom, then her Birth?  
whom some do think her mean and Low.  
As much of Honour can bring forth,  
as you have POWER to Show.

The Name of *Montford* which had been held so famous for Vertue and Valour in those Days, did not a little cause Wonder in the Hearers, who desiring him to explain himself, he plainly told them his Adventures in *France* and *England*, and how he took up the Trade of Begging, and the like; which caused a general Joy, since all that had formerly known him by that Name, supposed him to be dead; and the *Bridegroom* was pronounced now more happy then ever. So his lovely Bride whose Birth and Fortune equalled his in all Degrees; and old *Montford* promising for the Credit of his Daughter, to leave of the Begging trade, and live upon what he had got; the Day was Concluded, to the Joy and Satisfaction of all Parties.

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